

Town of Groton Zoning Commission Public Hearing Zoning Regulations & Map

June 19, 2019

Horsley Witten Group

Sustainable Environmental Solutions

55 Dorrance Street • Suite 200 • Providence, RI 02903
401-272-1717 • horsleywitten.com



Town of Groton, CT
Zoning Commission



The Process

How did we get where
we are today?

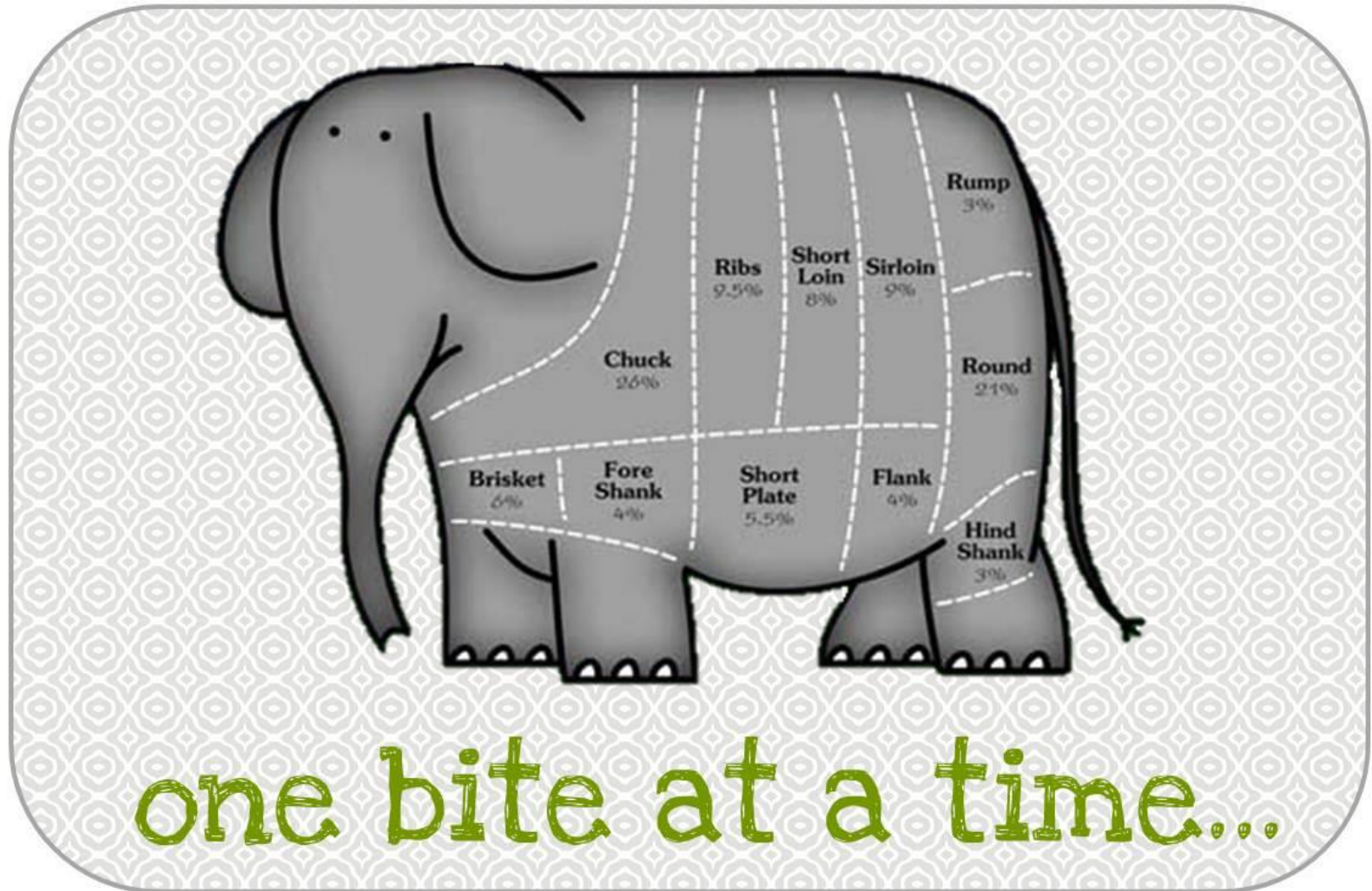


Why Change the Zoning Regulations?

Goal was to make the new regulations . . .

- Easier to read and understand
- Clearer about the development process
- Have performance standards for certain uses, to make them better neighbors
- Reflect modern uses of land
- Comply with current local, State, and Federal laws

How do you eat an elephant?



What was the Process?

Step #1: Identify the Issues (Summer and Fall 2017)

- Audit of existing zoning regulations
- What is currently working? What is not?
- What do applicants tend to be most regularly confused by?
- What pieces cause the most problems for staff?
- What pieces are no longer up to date with the law?

What was the Process?

Step #2: Address the Issues Section by Section (Late Fall 2017 – Early 2019)

- Presentation of issues to the Zoning Commission (ZC)
- Consultant team provides analysis to help inform decisions
- Feedback from ZC on ways to address the issues
- Consultant team drafts edits to the section
- Staff and ZC review and approve edits

And
Repeat!

What was the Process?

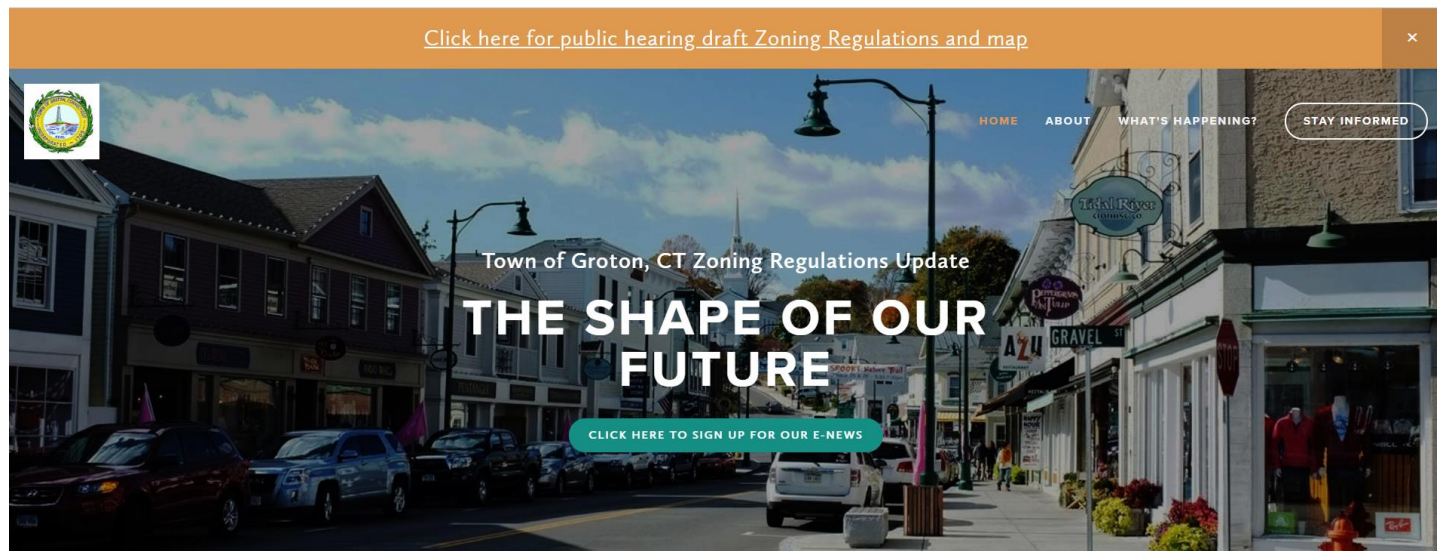
Step #2 also included . . .

- Input from the public and others attending ZC meetings
- Outreach to community organizations, other town staff and boards/commissions on topics of interest to them
- Zoning updates discussed at over **two dozen** ZC meetings over the course of 18 months
- All materials, including agenda packets, presentations, and meeting minutes posted on the project website

What was the Process?

Project Website – www.grotonctzoning.com

- Repository of information
- Public was able to submit questions or sign up for notifications through the website



What was the Process?

Step #3: Updating the Zoning Map (Ongoing throughout the project)

Goals . . .

- Minimize changes to the boundaries of residential districts
- Minimize “split lots” – lots split by more than one zone
- Establish new “mixed-use” districts
- Make sure each zoning district has a clear description of what the Town would like to see happen within it

What was the Process?

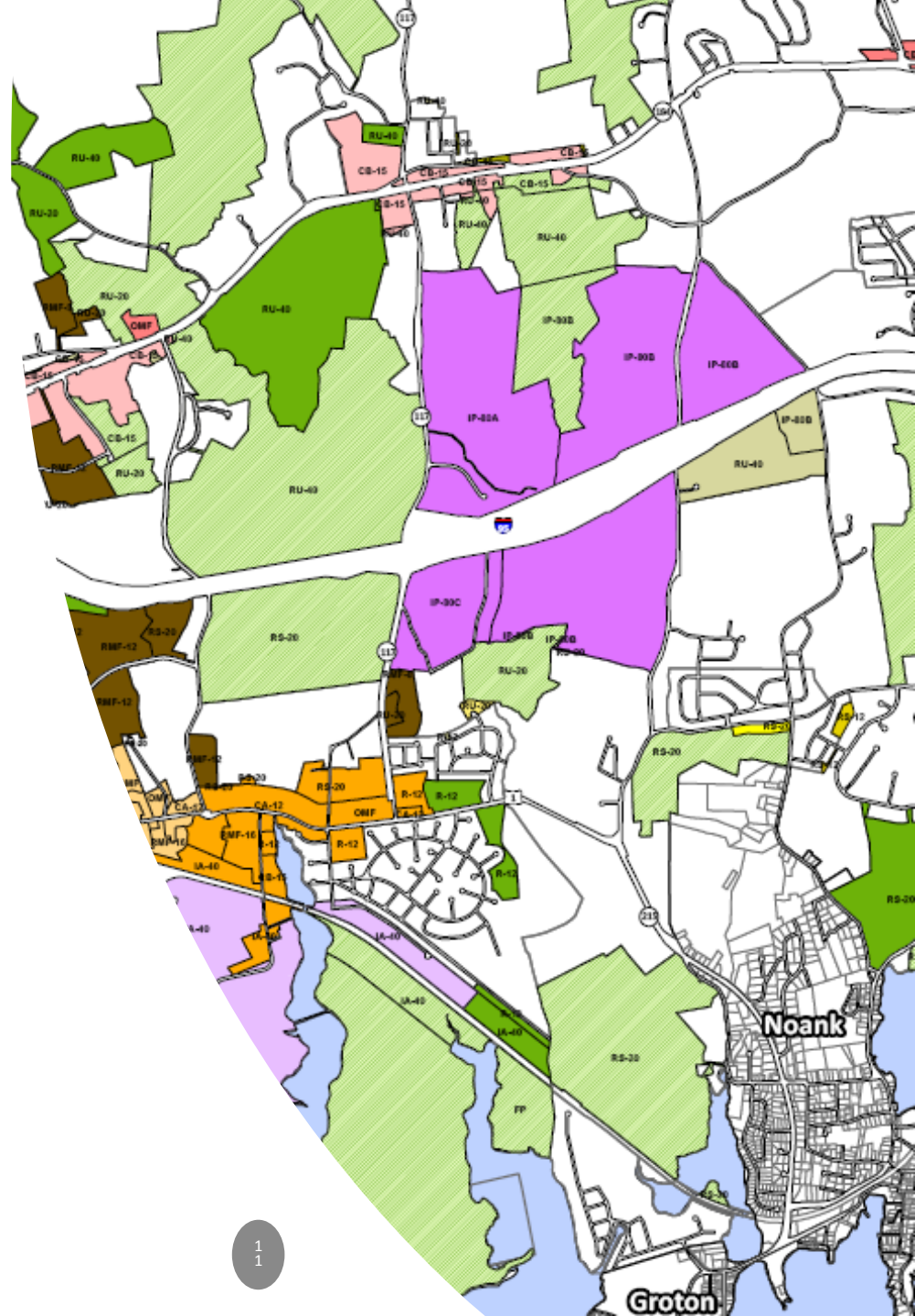
Step #4: Putting it Together (Early 2019 – Present)

- Formatting the edited sections to be more readable
- Developing a formatting plan for easier navigation
- Adding text on “How to Read these Regulations”
- Re-ordering the sections for a more logical flow

All the formatting will be finalized once the text is approved and adopted

What's Changed?

Proposed Changes to the Zoning Map



Zoning Map Change Analysis

Summary

- Colored areas show parcels that have changed from one zoning district to another. Labels show existing zoning. Colors show proposed zoning.
- Boundaries between major categories of land uses (Residential, Commercial, and Industrial) remain largely unchanged.
- New “Green” districts represent land that is already protected in some way for conservation and/or recreation.

DRAFT GUIDE
Proposed Zone Designation Changes
April 30, 2019



Legend

Labels indicate existing zoning

Colors indicate proposed zoning
 by key below

Zone

	R-7
	R-12
	RS-12
	RS-20
	RU-20
	RU-40
	RU-80
	RM
	CR
	CN
	WW
	MDD
	MTC
	MVC
	IG
	IM
	GR
	GC
	NMDD

RMF 8, 12, and 16 to RM

WDD to MDD

WF-20 to WW

City of Groton

Groton
Long Point

0 750 1,000 3,000 4,000 6,000 7,500 Feet

1 inch = 1,500 feet

Horsley Witten Group
 Sustainable Environmental Solutions
 55 Dorrance Street • Suite 200 • Providence, RI 02903
 401.272.1717 • horsleywitten.com

Changes in Name Only

DRAFT GUIDE
Proposed Zone Designation Changes
April 30, 2019



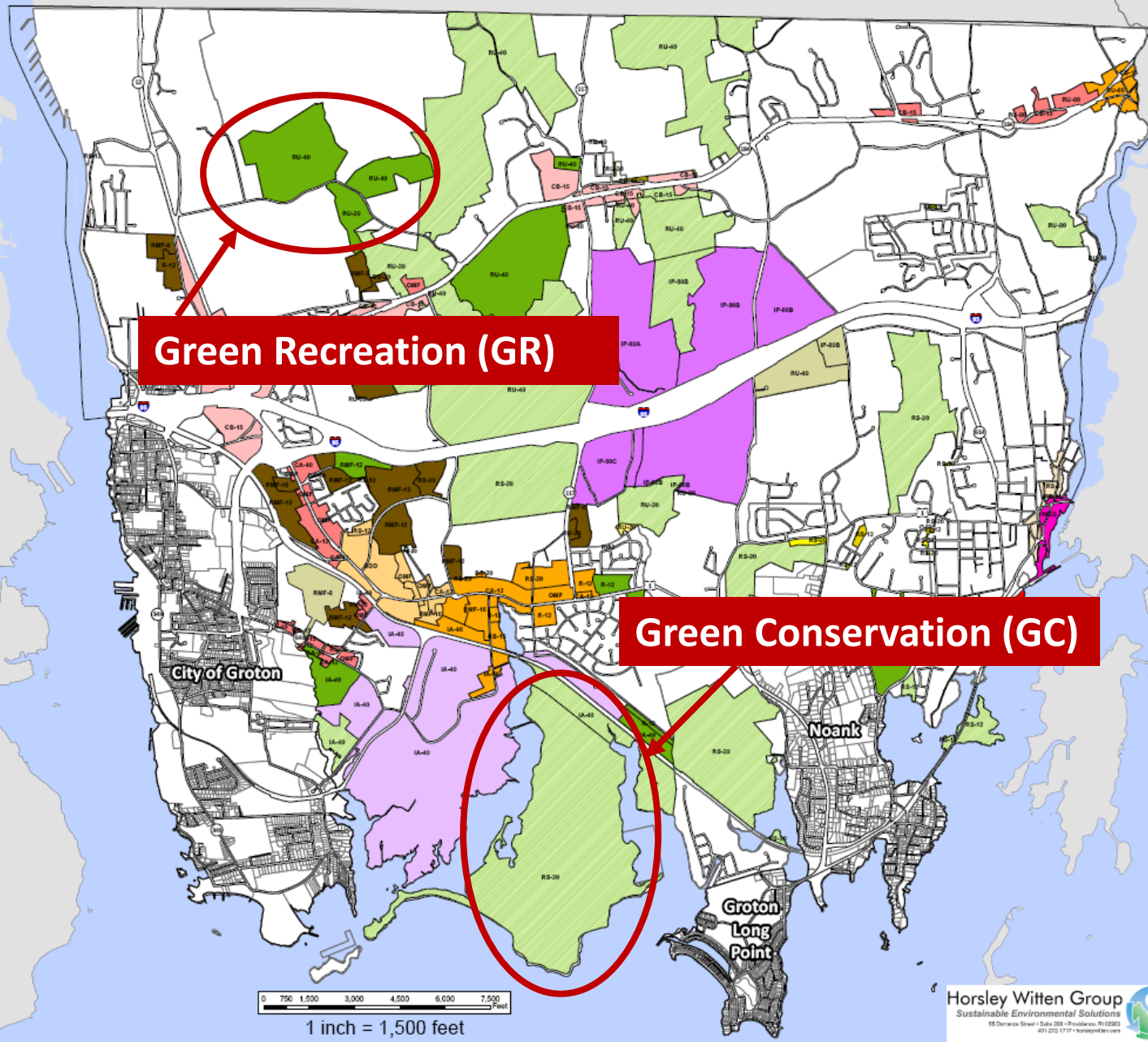
Legend

Labels indicate existing zoning

Colors indicate proposed zoning
 by key below

Zone

	R-7
	R-12
	RS-12
	RS-20
	RU-20
	RU-40
	RU-80
	RM
	CR
	CN
	WW
	MDD
	MTC
	MVC
	IG
	IM
	GR
	GC
	NMDD



Green Districts – Applied to areas *already* protected

DRAFT GUIDE
Proposed Zone Designation Changes
April 30, 2019



Legend

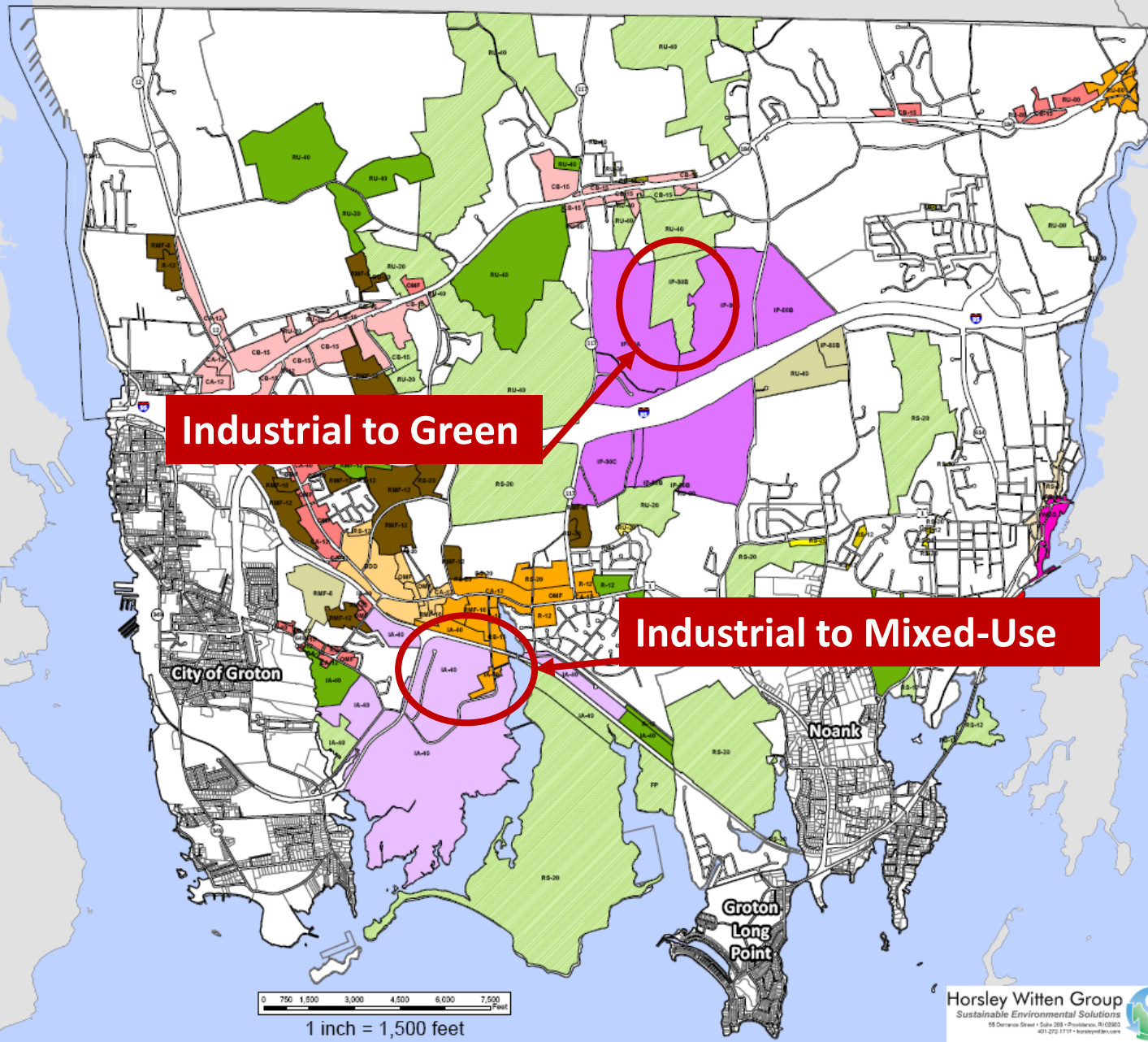
Labels indicate existing zoning

Colors indicate proposed zoning
by key below

Zone

	R-7
	R-12
	RS-12
	RS-20
	RU-20
	RU-40
	RU-80
	RM
	CR
	CN
	WW
	MDD
	MTC
	MVC
	IG
	IM
	GR
	GC
	NMDD

The information on this map is for
guidance purposes only: See Draft
Zoning Map for official proposed
changes.



DRAFT GUIDE

Proposed Zone Designation Changes

April 30, 2019



Legend

Labels indicate existing zoning

Colors indicate proposed zoning
by key below

Zone

	R-7
	R-12
	RS-12
	RS-20
	RU-20
	RU-40
	RU-80
	RM
	CR
	CN
	WW
	MDD
	MTC
	MVC
	IG
	IM
	GR
	GC
	NMDD

The information on this map is for
guidance purposes only: See Draft
Zoning Map for official proposed
changes.

Commercial, Regional

Commercial, Neighborhood

0 750 1,000 3,000 4,000 6,000 7,500 Feet

1 inch = 1,500 feet

Horsley Witten Group
Sustainable Environmental Solutions
55 Dorrance Street • Suite 200 • Providence, RI 02903
401.272.1717 • horsleywitten.com

Commercial Districts

DRAFT GUIDE

Proposed Zone Designation Changes

April 30, 2019



Legend

Labels indicate existing zoning

Colors indicate proposed zoning by key below

Zone

	R-7
	R-12
	RS-12
	RS-20
	RU-20
	RU-40
	RU-80
	RM
	CR
	CN
	WW
	MDD
	MTC
	MVC
	IG
	IM
	GR
	GC
	NMDD

**Mixed Use Town
Center (MTC)**

**Mixed Use Village
Center (MVC)**

City of Groton

Groton
Long
Point

0 750 1,000 3,000 4,000 6,000 7,500
Feet

1 inch = 1,500 feet

Horsley Witten Group
Sustainable Environmental Solutions
55 Dorrance Street • Suite 200 • Providence, RI 02903
401.272.1717 • horsleywitten.com

The information on this map is for guidance purposes only: See Draft Zoning Map for official proposed changes.

Mixed-Use Districts

What's Changed?

Major Proposed Changes to Zoning Policy



Mixed-Use Zoning Districts

What are the standards (“must haves”) for how a development *functions*?

- **Dimensional Standards**

(Lot size, setbacks, height, public space, etc.)

- **Circulation**
- **Property Frontage**
- **Landscaping**
- **Parking & Loading**
- **Fencing & Screening**
- **Lighting**
- **Utility Lines**
- **Building Form**
- **Building Entranceways**

Guidelines

Other voluntary guidelines (outside of zoning) will be established for how a development *should look*.

Mixed-Use Town Center (MTC) Zoning District

What is it meant to do?

- Encourage redevelopment into multi-story mixed-use
- Meet regional market demand
- Be a true Town Center and gathering spot
- Be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly
- Facilitate public transit
- Provide new public spaces



Mixed-Use Village Center (MVC) Zoning District

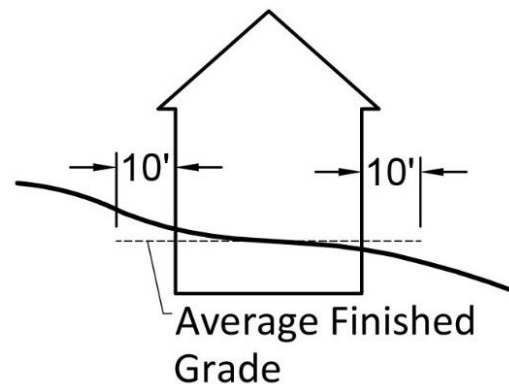
What is it meant to do?

- Encourage mixed-use development on a smaller “village” scale
- Build on existing historic character
- More flexibility for uses in existing buildings
- Be more pedestrian and bicycle friendly
- Provide new public spaces



Definitions

- All definitions moved to the same place (Sec. 2)
- Every use in the Table of Permitted Uses now has a definition
- Some graphics have been added so that people can see what a definition means



Zoning Districts

Sec. 3 now has the following for each zoning district:

- Written description of the **intent** of the zone
- **Dimensional standards**
- **Graphic** showing setbacks, building envelope, and building coverage
- Plus **design standards** for Mixed-Use zoning districts

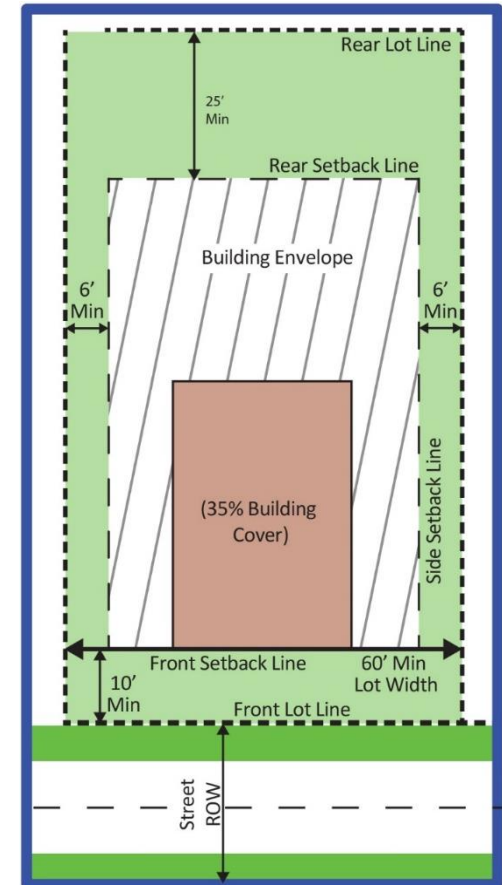


Table of Permitted Uses

Several changes for which uses are allowed in which zones:

- Some uses have been **consolidated** with others
- Some uses have been **eliminated**
- Some more modern uses have been **added**
- The Town analyzed use by use to determine what would be appropriate where

Several changes make the Table more user friendly, showing:

- When a **special permit** is required
- Any additional conditions in the **WRPD**
- **Parking standards** for each use
- Where in the regulations **additional conditions** are located

Dimensional, Building & Lot Standards

Separate handout prepared summarizing these changes

- Changes made based on analysis of existing buildings and lot sizes
- Goal was to make the dimensional standards as close as possible to what already exists in each zone
- Help reduce nonconformity and the need for variances
- Building height remains the same in all Residential zones
- Building height has been reduced for some properties in the proposed CN zone and for all properties in the IM zone

Conditional Uses

Intention of the Conditional Uses . . .

- Provide clarity, limit the requirement for special permits
- Avoid conflicts with neighboring uses in the future
- Provide healthy, safe environments for residents, visitors

Most significant changes include . . .

- Conditions for non-residential uses in the RU zones
- Addition of Cottage Communities
- Simple home-based businesses allowed without a permit
- New standards for outdoor patios for restaurants, etc.
- New standards for Bed & Breakfasts

Environmental Performance Standards

New section, common to many communities, setting basic standards for all uses and activities anywhere in Town related to . . .

- Air Emissions
- Waste
- Flammable and Explosive Materials
- Vibration
- Heat
- Radioactivity and Electrical Disturbance
- Discharges
- Odors
- Noise

Parking

Changes are relatively minor, but important

- Parking Standards table tied to Table of Permitted Uses
- Parking standards updated based on best practice and staff experience
- Most uses have a minimum AND maximum parking standard
- New standards have been added requiring bicycle parking facilities in mixed-use and commercial zoning districts

Signs

Significant changes largely based on Supreme Court ruling

- Signs cannot be regulated based on content
- Signs CAN be regulated based on location, height, size, illumination, and type of sign
- Standards for different zoning districts include . . .
 - Types of signs allowed (and how many) and types prohibited
 - Size limits and setbacks
 - Whether or not a permit is required
 - Temporary vs. Permanent signs

Other Misc. Changes

Outdoor Lighting

- Town wide standards for effectiveness, safety, and “dark sky” protection
- New guidelines drafted as appendix to zoning

Hazardous Materials

- Town wide standards for safely storing and using hazardous materials

General Procedures

- Sets standards common to any type of application
- Makes clear exactly what information is needed from applicants

Public Comment

